There begynneth a goodly treatyse / and it is called / a notable lesson / otherwyse it is called the golden pystle. Im prẽssus. Anno domini. M.CCCCC. xxx.

A Good/holsome lesson & profytable vnto al chrystianes/ascrybed vnto saynt Bernarde/ and put amonge his Werkes [I thynke] by some good man/ that wolde it shulde therby haue the more authorite/ and the rather be redde/ and better be borne a way. For doubtles it is a good mater/ and edificatyue vnto all them that haue a zele/ and cure vnto soule helthe & desyre of saluacyon. It is called in the tytle. Notabile documẽtum. that is to say/ a notable lesson. And some done call it the goldẽ pystle. It folowyth immedyately after a lytell Werke called Formula honeste vite. ỹ forme/ and maner of an honest lyfe/ or of honest lyuynge.

IF you intende to please god / and wolde obteyne grace to fulfyll the same / two thynges ben vnto you very necessary. The fyrst. you must withdraw your mynde from all worldly & trāsytory thynges / in suche maner / as though you cared not whether any suche thynges were in this worlde / or no. The secunde is. That you gyue and apply youre selfe so wholy to god / and haue youre selfe in suche a wayte / that you neuer do / say / ne thynke / ỹ you knowe / suppose / or byleue shulde offende or displease god / for by this meane / you may soneste and most redely obtayne / and wynne his fauour and grace. In all thynges esteme and acount your selfe most vyle / & most symple / and as very nought in respecte / and regarde of vertue / and thynke / suppose / & byleue that all persones ben good / & better than you be / for so shall you moche please our lorde. What so euer you se / or seme to perceyue / in any person / or yet here of any chrystyane / take you none occasion therin / but rather ascrybe / & apply you all vnto the best / & thynke or suppose / all is done or sayde for a good intent / or purpose / though it seme contrary. For mannes suspicions and lyght iudgmentes ben soone / and lyghtly deceyued / or begyled. Displease no person wyllyngly. Ne euer speke euyll of any person / though it were neuer so true ỹ you say. For it is not lawfull to shewe in cōfession ỹ vyce / or defaute of any ꝑson / except you myght otherwyse shewe & declare your owne offence. Speke lytell or nought vnto your ꝓpre / & selfe laude / or prayse / thoughe it were true / and vnto your famylyer felowe / or feythfull frēde. But study to kepe secrete / and prcyue your vertue / rather than your vyce. Yet were it a cruell dede for any ꝑsons to defame them selfe. Be more gladde

to gyue your eare/ & herynge vnto the prayse/rather thā vnto the dyspraysse of any person. And euer byware as well of herynge/as spekynge of detraccyon. And whan you speke/take good deliberacion/ & haue fe we wordes/ & let those be true/and good:sadly set & wysely ordred. yf any wordes be spoken vnto you of vyce/or vanyte (as soone as you may) breke of/ & leue ỹ talke/or cōmunycacion. And euer returne/and apply your selfe vnto some appoynted good/ & godly occupacyon/bodyly/or ghostly. yf any soden chaunce fall or happe vnto you/or vnto any of youres/leyne not to lyghtly ther vnto/ne care moch therfore. yf it be of prosperite/reioyce not moch therin/ne be ouer glad therof. yf it be aduersite/be not ouercast/or ouerthrowen therw̄/ne brought to sorowe/or sadnes/thanke god of all/ & set lytle therby. Repute all thyges transytorye: as of lytle prayce or valure. Gyue euer most thought/ & care vnto those thynges/ỹ may profyte & promote ỹ soule. Flee/ & auoyde ỹ persones/ & places of moche spetche/for better is to kepe stylēce/than to speke. Kepe ỹ tymes & places of stilēce precysely/so ỹ you speke not wout reasonable & vnkeyned cause. The tymes of stilēce in religion bē these. From collacion vnto masse be ended after ỹ houre of terce. Frō ỹ fyrst grace i ỹ fraytour/ vnto ỹ ende of ỹ later grace. And frō ỹ begynnynge of cuē song/vnto grace be ended after soupe/or els ℞ fidicite/after ỹ cōmune beuer. The places of stilēce/ben: ỹ churche & ỹ claustre/ỹ fraytour & ỹ dortour. yf you ye stlaūdred/ & done take occasyon at ỹ faute/or offence of any person/ than loke well vpon youre selfe/ whether you be in the same defaute sumtyme your selfe/ & than haue cōpassion vpon your brother/or syster. yf ther be none suche defaut in you/thyke verely/ & byleue/ther may be/ & thā do: as

done soone fade/and fle for euer. The good persones/ for
theyr troubles suffred here vpon erthe: done get & wēne
eterne & euerlastynge glorye/Whiche the euyll persones
done lose. And contrary these euyll/& synfull persones/
for theyr ioy & pleasures here/done reyue by exchaunge
eterne & euerlastynge shame/& rebuke w̄ peyne/& wo vn
speacable. Whan so euer thā you ben dysposed to slugy-
nes/or to be drowsy/remysse in prayer/or dull in deuocy
on: thā take this lytle Werke/or some other good treaty/
& rede therin/& euer note Well the contentes therof/and
What is ment therby. And yf you be not therby delyue-
red or eased therof/than shyfte vnto some other Werke/
or occupacyon/so ỳ euer you auoyde ydlenes/& al bayne
pastymes/Whiche in dede ben losetyme. And than remē
bre that those that nowe byde in peyne/other in hell/or
yet in purgagory for suche tymes so passed/or lost/had
leuer thā all ỳ World/haue suche tyme to redeme theyr
peynes by/as you may haue yf you wyl. Tyme thā vn
to al psones wel occupied/is veray precious/& dere. By-
ware Well therfore: how you spende it/or passe it. For
you can neuer reuoke it/nor call it bakke. yf the tyme
passe you by trouble/& veracyon/thynke they ben hap-
py/and gracyous that ben past this Wretched lyfe/and
nowe in blys/for they shall neuer haue any suche mise-
rye. And Whan you fele a conforde or consolacyon spyry-
tuall/thanke god therof/& thynke the dampned soules
shall neuer haue any suche pleasure. And thus let this
be for your exercyse in the datyue. At nyght Whan you
go rest/fyrst make a counte w̄ your selfe/& remēbre how
you haue spende/or passed ỳ day & tyme/ỳ was gyuen
you to be vsed in vertue/& how you haue bystowed your
thoughtes/your Wordes/and your Werkes. And yf you

fynde no great thynge amys / gyue the whole laud and
prayse vnto our lorde god. And yf you perceyue cõtrary /
that you haue mysspende any parte therof / be sorye ther-
fore / and beseche our lorde of mercy / and forgyuenesse / &
promyse and verely purpose to make amendes the nexte
day. And yf you haue portunyte ther vpon / it shalbe full
conuenyent for you to be cõfessed on the nexte morowe.
And specyally yf ỳ mater done / sayde / or thought by de-
liberate consent / do grenously wey / & worke w̃ a grudge
in your conscyẽce: than wolde I aduyse you neuer to ete
nor drynke / tyll you be dyscharged therof / yf you may cõ
uenyently get a ghostly father. Now for a conclusyon of
this werke / put byfore you / as by case or ymaginacyon.
ij. large cytyes / one full of trouble / turmoyle / and myse-
rye / and let that be hell. The other cyte full of ioye / glad-
nes / consorte / and pleasure / and let that be heuen. Loke
well on them bothe / for in bothe be many dwellers / and
great compeny. Then cast and thynke within youre selfe
what thynge here myght so please you that you shulde
chuse ỳ worse cyte / or what thynge shulde dysplease you
on the other parte / wherby you shulde withdrawe your
selfe from that vertue that myght cõuaye & brynge you
vnto the other cyte. And whan you haue studyed well
here vpon / and can nothynge fynde / I dare well assure
you yf you kepe well the preceptes and cõsayles of this
lytle lesson / you shall fynde the ryght way / for the holy
ghost wyll instructe / & teche you where you be not suffy-
cyent of your selfe / so you endeuoyre & gyue dylygẽce / to
bere away & to folowe that here is taught. Rede it euery
weke ones / or twyse / or oftener yf you wyll. And where
you profyte / gyue thankes / laude / and prayse vnto oure
lorde god / & most swete sauyour Jesu christ / who sende

you his mercy and grace/that alway lyueth god. In se-
cula seculorum. Amen.

¶ This was brought vnto me in englyllhe of an olde
translacyon rugh/and rude/and requyred to amende it.
I thought ielle labour to wryte newe the whole/and I
haue done vnto the sentence not very nere the letter/and
in dyuers places added some thynges folowynge vpon
the same to make the mater more sentencyous/and full.
I beseche you take all thys the best/and praye for the
olde wretched brother of [illegible] Rychard Wdyssorde.

¶ Imprynted by me Wynkyn de Worde/dwellynge in
London/in Flete strete/at the lygne of the Sonne.
The.xxiij.daye of Nouember/the yere of our
lorde god.M.CCCCC.and.xxx.

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